

FAMILY CONNECTIONS
ARIZONA DES
TANF/ CHILD WELFARE SERVICES INTEGRATION

DESCRIPTION: The TANF/ Child Welfare Services Integration idea known as "Family Connections (FC)," has a primary focus of engaging families at risk of/or involved in the Child Welfare and TANF systems in comprehensive integrated services with the goal of assisting the families in achieving self- sufficiency, safety and overall well being.

BACKGROUND: Arizona Governor Napolitano and DES, ex-Director, David Berns, determined that the Department provided excellent services to the population of the State of Arizona, however, they also determined that the number of clients participating in TANF, and, that the numbers of Child Protective Services Children placed in congregate care (defined as Group Home and Group Shelters) were some of the highest in the nation. Mr. Berns also noted that the DES Divisions were operating independently or in "silos" with little communication across divisions. He also saw that CPS should not have to be the sole entity responsible for the protection of children and families. The Services Integration idea began approximately one and 1/2 years ago and within that time, tremendous headway have been made in the lines of communication and cooperativeness between divisions. Family Connections has been developed and structured from components of a very successful model and similar project in Merced, California.

SCOPE: To develop a comprehensive integrated services delivery system that is family centered, strength based, and targets at-risk families that without preventive and/or early intervention would be involved in TANF and/ or CPS.

OBJECTIVE (S): The primary objectives of FC is to reduce the number of children in congregate care, reduce the number of children entering foster care, and reduce the number of families at risk of/or on TANF. To attain these objectives FC utilizes family centered, strength based, solution focused models of intervention.

DES COLLABORATION: Services integration within the Department of Economic Security (DES) includes the following divisions:

Aging and Community Services
Family Assistance Administration
Child Care Administration
Child Protective Services
Developmental Disabilities
JOBS

Child Support Enforcement
Employment
Rehabilitation
Adult Protective Services
Administration

Additional Arizona State Division Collaborators: Other state Entities have agreed to collaborate with DES in achieving the goals and the mission of the DES. These entities include:

Arizona Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADBHS)
Arizona Division of Juvenile Corrections
Arizona Division of Juvenile Justice

Community collaborations: Several community, county and city entities, in Pima County and in Maricopa County, have been contacted and are collaborating with the DES to achieve the goals and the mission of the department. Many of the community entities have service contracts with various divisions within DES. The following list, although not inclusive, are some of the services that will be accessed from community collaborators:

Housing	Transportation
Food and food banks	Volunteers
Clothing and furniture banks	Education
Crisis shelters (homeless/ battering situations)	Cultural
Medical	Services for aging
Faith Based/Spiritual	Substance treatment

Family Connections description:

FC is comprised of 10 teams that include, a supervisor, case aide, clerical support staff and family services program staff that has expertise in Family Assistance/ JOBS Programs, and Child Welfare.

The FC team members have access to the DES data systems for acquiring and entering client family data/information. Each of the teams is co-located in a DES multi-services office across the state but particularly in zip codes where high service needs have been identified. At present, the teams have specialties to include Domestic Violence, Collaboration with CPS (cases that are closing within 30 days, Team Decision Making cases, Family to Family Initiative, etc.) and Kinship teams. There are four diversity teams in Tucson and six in Phoenix.

FC can accept referrals from all potential resources but concentrates on their respective zip codes (with minimal exceptions), and, if the referral meets the “at risk” target populations to be served by the program. Services to be provided are identified during an intake session with the family whereby they are advised that the services provided are voluntary and that their participation is critical to the process. Families and FC staff jointly coordinates the family meeting sites, regularity of appointments, participants and agenda. The “life of a case” is determined by the goals of the case plan, successful resolution of identified risks and mutual agreement between the family and FC. Instruments for identification of “risk factors” and “successful resolution” have been developed and are utilized consistently on every case. Other pertinent data is also collected and maintained for demographic and evaluation purposes.

The current Family Connections sites are as follows:

In Phoenix we have six sites:

4205 West Glenrosa, Phoenix
1500 East Thomas, Phoenix
815 N. 18th St., Phoenix
3631 West Thomas, phoenix
163 No. Dobson, Mesa
290 East La Canada, Avondale

In Tucson we have four sites:

5441 East 22nd St.
250 So. Toole
1011 No. Craycroft
2750 So. 4th Ave.